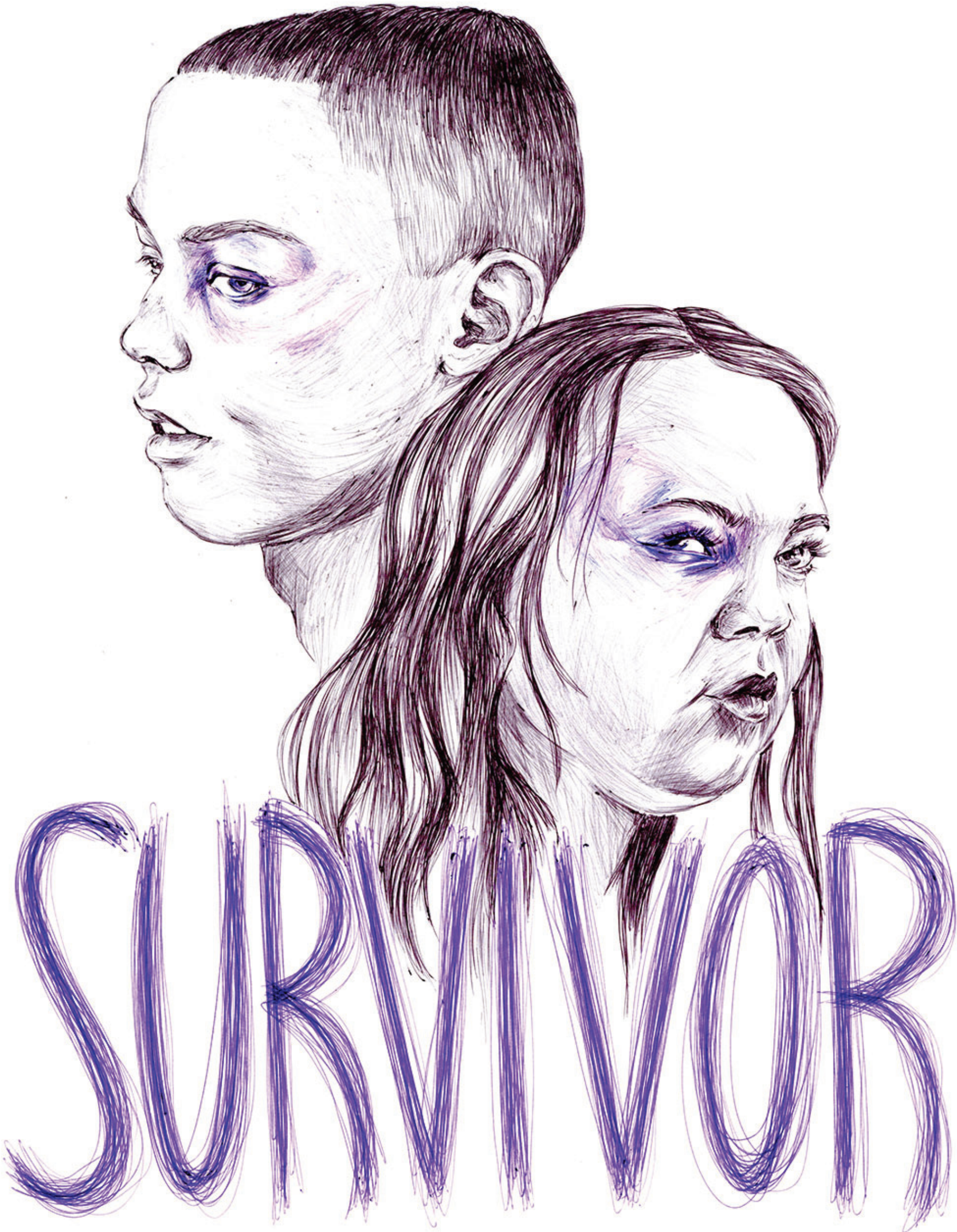


Northwest Missourian

SPECIAL ISSUE: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

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ALEXANDREA MESZ CARTOONIST

A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and the Northwest Missourian is dedicating its first issue of the month directly to spreading awareness. We strictly covered news relating to domestic violence within our community as well as reopening the “Letters From” Project. Domestic violence affects more people than we realize. On any given day, there is a high probability that you may have crossed paths with a survivor of domestic violence. One in three women and one in four men have experienced some form of violence from an intimate partner. Domestic violence is a well-known subject, but it is rarely talked about. There are people who live their daily lives not realizing they have been in a violent domestic relationship. Domestic violence is not just physical, it is emotional, mental, financial and sexual. People of all ages, sexes, races, incomes, religions, cultures or any other defining demographics have been affected by domestic violence. It doesn’t discriminate and may be affecting the closest people in our lives without knowing.

The Editorial Board believes it is not only important, but it is imperative to understand the severity of the subject. With our given platform, we knew it was a responsibility of ours to reach to our audience in many ways — starting with the survivors. For some survivors, their voice has been muted, turned away and shut down. This is the sad reality of the world that we live in today, but we wanted to make a change to this. We decided to allow those in our community to have their voice heard by submitting anonymous letters of their experiences to be published in this week’s edition of the Northwest Missourian. We didn’t want to stop there, the Editorial Board realizes that as a smaller community, the resources and awareness to this subject is limited. With that in mind, we also wanted to call attention to this subject within our news stories. The Editorial Board of the Northwest Missourian stands with not only the survivors, but the current victims as well, of domestic violence. We encourage those who are or have been in danger to speak up and reach out to the local resources.



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Survivors share stories, hope through shirts for It's On Us Clothesline Project

ALYNA THIBAUT
Missourian Reporter I @TheMissourian

In a 2011 study among college students, 42% of students who experienced abuse said they didn't tell anyone. All students hear stories about it, but they are rarely taught how to deal with or tell if they are in the state of a violent relationship.

It's On Us will be hosting its annual Clothesline Project for survivors from Oct. 7-14. The survivors will be able to share their stories and hang up the clothes that were worn in the events of violence.

It's On Us is a local chapter of the national nonprofit organization that specializes in violence prevention. It meets every other Thursday at 4 p.m. in the First Family Dining Room in the J.W. Jones Student Union.

The organization was founded in September 2014 as an initiative of the Obama-Biden Administration. It allowed schools to start chapters on campus to help prevent, learn and provide resources and support for survivors. This organization has grown into one of the largest programs dedicated to college sexual assault prevention and survivor support.

Madelyn Cline is the secretary of It's On Us and has been a part of the organization for two years.

"I would say I have learned a lot from this organization. I have learned that there are a lot

of things that I would've never thought about myself until it happens to someone you care about," Cline said. "There is a lot of people that will say 'I will do this this and this immediately,' but you get into your fight or flight mode and most of the time people fight or they freeze."

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and the organization has started the month with Sex in the Station. This event gives peers the opportunity to learn and ask questions about consent, safe sex and the hard topics of violence.

Clothes will be hung up by the Memorial Bell Tower, and students can stop and view and read about the feelings they felt during the event or after. Last year's shirts had a variety of different inspirational words written on them. Shirts were scattered with poems and messages from survivors, like "Drunk consent does not equal consent." These messages will be written across different colored shirts that represent different types of domestic violence.

White shirts are in memory of people who have died due to violence. Yellow or beige correspond with battered or assaulted victims. Red, pink or orange are for survivors of rape and sexual assault.

Blue or green represents survivors of incest or child sexual violence. Purple or lavender exemplifies people attacked because of their gender identity



FILE
A Northwest student helps set up the Clothesline Project put on by It's On Us. This year's project, which is Oct. 7-14, gives survivors an opportunity to share their stories while hanging up clothes they were wearing at the time.

or sexual orientation. Black is for people who are permanently disabled as a result of violence or who were abused because they are disabled.

"The simple recognition from an organization on campus allows the safety for people to feel like 'oh, this isn't just me, I'm not the only one dealing with this here on campus,'" Cline said.

According to Rainn, 54% of sexual violence survivors are between the ages of 18-34.

Courtney Rowe, the president of It's On Us, said it's important to her to have an organization here at Northwest that gives survivors the opportunity to share

and reclaim what has happened to them. She said she wants to make awareness of these issues prevalent on campus and make it known that this happens on campus and to college students.

"We give people the opportunity to share their story in the form of art. I think that's really powerful," Rowe said. "It allows people to kind of reclaim in a way what happened to them and share their story and get their voices back from a time where they felt like it had been taken away completely."

The organization encourages people to join in Engage Training Oct. 9 from 2-3:30 p.m. This training is a multi-level violence

prevention strategy to reduce harm on campus related to drug use, alcohol use, discrimination and much more that play a big role in violence.

It's On Us consistently looks for ways to expand its impact and help prevent violence on campus. It offers service work for students and hopes to bring in speakers to talk about sex trafficking, domestic and sexual violence.

"At the end of the day, if you stay silent, you are being complicit in the problem and talking about it, raising awareness, that is the first step. We are always looking for ways to expand that impact," Rowe said.

Iowa, St. Joseph offers more resources to violence survivors

JAKOB PRATER
News Editor I @JakobLPrater

North Star Advocacy Center is a local resource for anyone going through domestic violence, whether it be physical, sexual,

emotional or financial abuse.

But it's not the only nearby resource for anyone going through any of those things. There's the University's Wellness Services, the Young Women's Christian

Association and Southwest Iowa Families Inc.

To the north is the Southwest Iowa Families, a mental health service based in Clarinda, Iowa. Southwest Iowa Families has

been serving children and their families for 27 years. It serves foster children, at-risk children and anyone else in southern Iowa. Its staff is specifically trained in mental health services and trauma focused behavioral therapy for children. Its mission is to "enhance the lives of children and their families in southwest Iowa."

In 2019, Southwest Iowa Families served over 1,000 individuals in counseling over 5,098 hours. It provides southwest Iowa and northwest Missouri with abuse prevention services, helping children's behavior in school improve and others.

The YWCA sits just off North Eighth Street and Jules Street in St. Joseph, just 45 minutes down the road. The YWCA's mission is to eliminate racism and empower women and thus get a lot of domestic abuse victims walking through its doors.

The St. Joseph YWCA has been in operation since 1888 and is one of the two within the state of Missouri. The YWCA offers shelter, counseling, housing services and outreach to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, helping women, men and children. It also provides teen programming, a childcare center and a teenage parent program. Last year, the St. Joseph location served over 1,600 women and children, from sheltering, counseling and other programs. The YWCA also answered 1,480 hotline calls in 2021.

Traci McChristy is the YWCA's volunteer and outreach director and has worked with the St. Joseph location for 16 years. Originally starting off in the organization's teenage parent program, McChristy said that over the years she's learned a lot about domestic violence, such as why women often return to their abusers.

"It could be economic, they could be scared because they don't want anything to happen to that pet that they have to leave

behind, they worry about uprooting their kids and changing what they're used to – their schedules, their routines," McChristy said. "So there's just so many reasons why a person doesn't leave a domestic violence situation."

All of the YWCA's domestic violence advocates have been trained to help the abused create a safety plan for when they plan to leave their abusive partner or situation once and for all.

"That moment when they decide that they are leaving for good is the most dangerous time for them," McChristy said. "So it's important to have that safety plan in place."

Another great resource for the abused is right here in town, the University Wellness Center. Wellness Services offers all kinds of counseling for anyone in any situation. Wellness Services offer traditional counseling, peer wellness coaching and for the emergencies, a crisis service, where students, faculty and staff can meet with a triage counselor at the Wellness Center during business hours or a 24-hour support line at (888) 279-8188. Scheduling a session with a Wellness Services counselor just takes a phone call.

On average, it takes women seven attempts to leave an abusive relationship. Over the years, McChristy has seen some of the same people walk into the YWCA's doors more than once.

"When someone has been here, and they've gone back to their abuser, and they come here again, we treat them like it's the first time," McChristy said. "We don't judge. Because we don't know the reasoning, so we have to keep that in mind."

The St. Joseph YWCA has continuously served over 500 women a year and have given shelter to those in need for over 16,000 nights. Its facility is located at 304 N. Eighth street. To call its crisis hotline, call 800-653-1477.

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10/20

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10/22

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10/22

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NATHAN SMITH PHOTOGRAPHER
In the middle of East Second Street sits North Star Advocacy Center, which is preparing for the turning of the seasons with fall decorations on its front porch. The North Star Advocacy Center welcomes victims of sexual and domestic violence with open arms and offers victim advocate services to those in need.

North Star: Helping domestic violence and sexual assault survivors one day at a time

KENNEDY KALVODA
News Reporter | @Kkalvoda1

A pale yellow house sits near the end of Second Street. This quaint looking house is the home of an organization that has done a lot for people in the Maryville community and beyond – the North Star Advocacy Center.

North Star is an organization that specializes in providing services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Its services are provided for victims and survivors in Nodaway, Gentry, Atchison, Holt and Worth counties. The mission of the advocacy center as stated on its website, is validating and empowering victims of domestic and sexual violence while working to influence a cultural change.

North Star was established in July 2002 under the original name “The Children and Family Center of Northwest Missouri.” The organization has continued to evolve by expanding its services throughout the two decades it has been serving members of nearby counties.

It assists with multiple aspects of domestic violence and sexual assault. Some examples are hospital and medical advocacy, court advocacy, a 24-hour crisis phone to reach a member of the North Star team, 24-hour shelter for survivors who need it and many more services. All of the services provided by the advocacy center are confidential and free of charge.

In 2021, it served a total of 321 clients with these various direct services, which consisted of 263 females, 21 males and 37 children. The advocacy center also received \$35,294 in donated items during 2021.

Linda Mattson has been the executive director of the advocacy center since 2016. Mattson said that even though she is the director, she doesn’t feel much pressure in the job. The one thing she said she does feel pressure about sometimes is advertising the advocacy cen-

ter to the community.

“I feel that we’re always looking for ways to reach more victims,” Mattson said. “In that way, I feel pressure to get the word out about our services. Because it seems like no matter what we do, people still don’t know we’re here. I just want the word to get out.”

Court/Victim Advocate Meghann Kosman said most people assume the advocacy center is just a shelter for domestic violence survivors. Because of this, they think they have to stay in the shelter in order to receive the services provided, which is not the case, and many of them aren’t aware of the other services that are provided by the advocacy center.

“Once we call ourselves a domestic, sexual violence shelter, a lot of people will just dismiss and think ‘well I don’t need that service’ and then that leaves them unaware of the other services that we provide,” Kosman said. “I want people to know that those services are available too, not just the shelter.”

North Star is an organization that means many different things to the people who are a part of it. Mattson said for her North Star is a place where people can come and not be judged, and it’s a place where domestic violence survivors are given their control and power back.

Kosman said for her, North Star is a place where survivors can come to be believed and validated. Court Advocate Wyatt Williams said for him, North Star is a way to improve all five counties it serves, and a tool that can be used for good in the community. On-call Victim Advocate Julia Day said for her, North Star is exactly like the star that it’s named after, a guiding light in the darkness of domestic violence and sexual assault.

“Being in a domestic violence relationship or having been sexually assaulted can feel like living in the darkness,” Day said in an email to The Missouri-

an. “You feel so alone and as though no one can see you. You have nothing but the darkness, or abuse, surrounding you. The staff at North Star are meant to be a light to people who are quite literally stuck in the cycle.”

Mattson wanted people in the community to know North Star is there to help people always, no matter what the specific situation they are experiencing may entail.

“My team here will work and do whatever they need to to help,” Mattson said. “There are a lot of similarities to every situation, but every situation is unique. We really work hard to do whatever we can to help you with your unique situation.”

Day said North Star and the work it does in the community doesn’t just assist those who are experiencing physically abusive relationships.

“Domestic violence is not just physical,” Day said in an email to The Missourian. “It includes emotional abuse. So many people go without help because of the thought ‘well, they’ve never hit me,’ but emotional abuse is domestic violence and can leave scars that will last longer than physical violence.”

Court Advocate Wyatt Williams said he wanted people in the community to know that North Star is not just an advocacy center for women, and it is open to anyone who has experienced domestic violence or sexual assault that is in need of assistance.

“We get the misconception that it’s a women’s shelter only, but that’s not true,” Williams said. “We know that this kind of crime doesn’t discriminate. We want to be the best for everybody.”

Mattson said she hopes North Star can help educate Maryville community members and community members of nearby cities about how much a problem domestic abuse and sexual assault really is.

“I think it’s something that the general public is still very unaware of,” Mattson said.



SUBMITTED
The North Star team poses in front of its 20 bed shelter at 1220 E. Second St. Front: Sherry Brown, Krista VonBehren, Wyatt Williams. Back: Julia Day, Linda Mattson, Meghann Kosman, Cindy Lemar.

“Somebody they know is affected by this. We just want to keep working to reach people and let them know we’re here for them if they need it.”

Mattson said although there is a lot of work to do regarding educating people in the community, there are some community members who are very supportive of North Star and the work it does. She said that their support means a lot, and the advocacy center wouldn’t be there without the support.

Another big part of North Star is its volunteers and interns. Day said that volunteers are invaluable to North Star and its work.

“We love our volunteers and

so many things that we do for clients could not be done without them,” Day said in an email to The Missourian. “Something as simple as coming to the shelter to watch a client’s child while that client is in a counseling session can immensely help the wellbeing and trajectory for a client.”

Northwest students who have interest in volunteering at North Star must be at least 18 years old to do so, and they must pass a background check and go through training before becoming a volunteer. For students who are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer for North Star, email Kosman at advocate1@northstarac.org

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Missouri courts protect domestic violence victims

KIERSTEN HELM
Missourian Reporter | @TheMissourian

Every child is raised in a household in which they have little to no control. There are children who may experience domestic violence, and the effects follow that experience in many ways. While there are laws to protect these children, sometimes the trauma still impacts their lives.

Missouri is ranked eighth in the nation for domestic violence according to a 2010 study by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Court Appointed Special Advocates served 5,052 children in 2021. That is 5,052 children who have found themselves in a domestic violence situation and was taken to court. This non-profit organization advocates for permanency on behalf of the child and ensures the needs are met while in foster care.

When an adult victim files any form of a protection order, it only applies to themselves. However, they can file for a minor child protection order. Current Missouri law is that the child of an alleged abuser is provided a Guardian Ad Litem. This advocate does not represent the mother nor the father but rather ensures the child’s best interest is met. These GALs are appointed by a judge with a private list of qualified individuals that vary in each county. They meet with most family members through an investigation and use their best judgment to provide a recommendation to the judge from an outside perspective.

Anthony Moreno, an attorney in Kansas City, has worked with many families in similar situations.

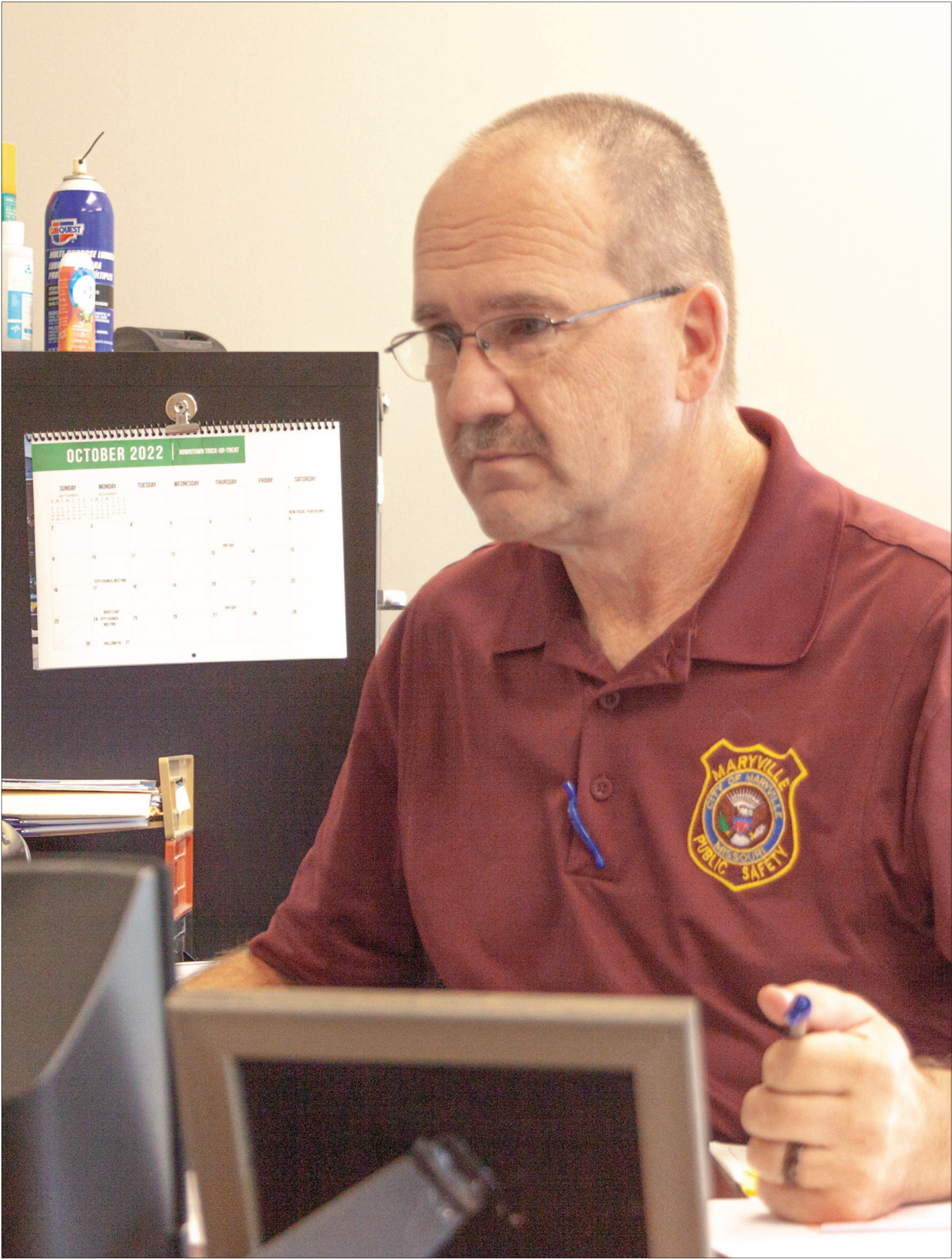
“The court will appoint the GAL, and at the next court appearance, the GAL will likely tell the court, ‘here’s what my findings were,’” Moreno said. “After the time in court, the judge will decide what is best for the child.”

The first step a victim will typically take is a protective order. This order acts as a band-aid to provide safety for the family. In court, the parents will create a plan that dictates what is allowed around the child. This parenting plan will address the responsibilities of the parents, and the stipulations can range from not consuming substances around the child to who picks up the child after school. If the parenting plan is broken, it will result in a civil case which can reflect custody issues. This is unlike breaking a protective order where one can go to jail if broken.

Women who have faced domestic violence and come to the realization that they are pregnant are forced to leave it up to the courts whether the abuser will have access to the child. The courts will take into consideration if there is any evidence of the abuser hurting the baby, typically after the birth date, or how the baby was affected during pregnancy.

“The father will have to file for a paternity case if they were never married, and he technically has not done anything to harm the child because the child isn’t born yet. This is the gray area that attorneys will have to fight,” Moreno said. “Most judges are going to go from the date of birth forward and go ‘can anybody prove to me from this case forward that there is a specific threat to this child?’”

When it comes to proving domestic violence, it is up to the plaintiff in the case to provide evidence for the case. Lawyers say it is important to document everything so it is easier to fight in court. This will give the victim their voice back.



TYSON ELLIOTT | PHOTOGRAPHER
Police Chief Ron Christian sits at his desk in the Maryville Public Safety Office. Christian said many things can lead to a domestic disturbance call coming in, arguments over finances, child custody or substance abuse. Christian also said hospitalizations and deaths from domestic abuse are low and uncommon in Maryville.

Maryville officers discuss domestic disturbance calls

JAKOB PRATER
News Editor | @JakobLPrater

When the police receive a domestic disturbance call, a lot can go wrong. Whenever police show up to a heated domestic situation, or whether it be an abusive call or a heated argument, problems can arise. Domestic disturbance calls happen often in any jurisdiction, and according to Police Chief Ron Christian, Maryville’s jurisdiction is no different.

“I don’t know if I could give you a number, but they’re very common. I think they are in almost any jurisdiction,” Christian said. “That’s one of the calls that causes a lot of problems because of the heightened emotions going on. They’re fairly frequent, probably not everyday, but several times a week.”

On an average day, over 20,000 domestic disturbance calls are made in the United States. Domestic disturbance calls aren’t just dangerous for the abused, it can also be a potentially violent situation for the responding officers.

In 2020, the second highest cause of death was firearm-related deaths, and seven of those officers were responding to a domestic disturbance call.

Lieutenant Deputy Director Mike Stolte said a tense or violent domestic argument can be triggered easily and can escalate quickly, with any number of reasons for any kind of argument, whether it be physical or verbal.

When a domestic disturbance call comes in, Christian said the first thing the situation calls for is safety, both the officers and the couple in question. They also have to see if any children are involved or in the house and make sure that they’re taken care of. Some incidents are easier to handle than others, but when a domestic disturbance call comes in, they never know what the situation is going to be like.

“We get [domestic disturbance calls] that get kind of ugly once in a while, but fortunately the amount of people that are hospitalized or killed out of domestic abuse cases are fairly low in our community,” Christian said. “But we get into some bad sit-

uations, particularly if there’s children involved. That always makes it a lot tougher to try to figure out what’s going on, and the emotions are even higher, and it adds a complicated layer to any dynamic.”

“Most of these situations don’t get better on their own, so we really encourage you to reach out to law enforcement or an advocacy center of some sort,”

-RON CHRISTIAN
POLICE CHIEF

Christian said there are lots of reasons why a domestic disturbance call can come in. Financial issues are a large part of them, and another common reason would be arguments over child custody.

Another factor at play is substance abuse, whether it causes the fight to begin or if nobody’s thinking clear-

ly. Christian said lots of stressful situations can lead to a call coming in, mainly the stress of raising children and which parent those children will live with.

For advice on how to handle such manners, Christian said from the police’s point of view of the delicate situations, saying that the worst thing an abused person can do is not reach out for help.

“The fear that some people will run into is that they’re afraid that if they say something to someone that it makes the situation worse. But we would certainly encourage them to either reach out to law enforcement or to an advocacy center,” Christian said. “We believe that getting help from an outside source somewhere is really critical. Most of these situations don’t get better on their own, so we really encourage you to reach out to law enforcement or an advocacy center of some sort.”

Christian said domestic disturbance calls are a very tough situation with no easy answers. Emotions are very complicated and hard to deal with, especially when certain issues come up, such as childcare and housing issues.

“I wish we can just give you a little check sheet. If you just follow these six steps, then everything works out great,” Christian said. “Life’s just not that easy.”

Domestic abuse is often thought of as physical abuse when more often than not, it’s something else, like verbal abuse, emotional abuse or even financial abuse. Christian mentioned the challenge that emotional abuse cases can bring into a courtroom. It’s a lot harder to gather evidence for emotional and mental abuse, whereas physical abuse can be easily proved by a black eye or a bruised torso.

“Domestic violence and abuse covers a broad spectrum of whatever economic class you’re in. You can live in this mansion and still have issues, or you can live in the slums and have the same issues,” Stolte said.

Christian and Stolte said they encourage anyone who’s a victim of domestic abuse to reach out to either the police or an advocacy center.

“LETTERS FROM”



THE FOLLOWING IS AN ACCOUNT FROM VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, WHICH MAY CONTAIN TRIGGERS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SIMILAR ATROCITIES. THEIR STORIES OF SURVIVAL AND BATTLING STIGMAS REMAIN ANONYMOUS. IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE, PLEASE REACH OUT TO THE RESOURCES LISTED BELOW.

FROM: ANONYMOUS

I am a survivor. The word survivor can be used in many ways, but here I mean of emotional abuse and all of its repercussions, and the way it degrades a person. Also, the physical harm I caused myself.

My abuser was my boyfriend. I have known him since kindergarten. The summer before high school we started dating. He was completely different before we dated. He was charming, and I thought the jealousy was cute.

Control – he was asking more questions than my mom, to the point where I felt like I was walking on eggshells. Phone – he was always asking for my phone and asking where I was and who I was with and when I could see him, and he would show up at my house on his bike. Putting me down – he would tell me that I was ugly, and no one else would date me. He threatened my life and my family’s lives.

I reached out to my support system (mom, school counselor, advocate). I was punched in the arm, which is the reason I filed out a police report with my mom and advocate, and the school was notified. The self-harm (the cutting and putting myself down and issues of depression) happened after I left.

Having to see him every day and continued controlling behavior lead to a spiral into a dark place. Now I have learned that no matter the situation, I am faced with giving up is not an option. I handled the self-harm through private counseling and help of my advocate and a teen support group that was offered at North Star Advocacy Center.

Now I am a confident young woman again who is able to share my struggle with you all. Even though I was 14 when my story started, I can say now that I’m in my mid twenties, and I am a survivor of my situation. You have to love yourself even when you feel as though you don’t deserve it. No one can change you but you.

FROM: ANONYMOUS

When asked if I wanted to share my story, I asked myself why I would do that. I hadn’t understood what domestic violence looked like if not a black eye. So maybe other people don’t know.

It’s not okay for another person to hurt you just because you’ve been in a relationship for a long time. I learned when things had been going good for a while, pressure would build and something not nice was going to happen. I tried to compliment him and do little things to let him know I loved him. But I could never prevent him from getting angry. Sometimes I never knew what I had done wrong. I found I couldn’t ever say no because that would spark a fight. I couldn’t make a decision without first making sure it was okay with him. I began to give in and began not to care. Good times became infrequent and only lasted a short stretch before something bad happened. I tolerated ugly behavior for years but wanted a good relationship so badly. I forgave and apologized a lot. A friend told me to stop saying I was sorry all the time and that often what had happened had nothing to do with me. Tolerating his abuse and unrepentant behavior wasn’t okay.

Domestic violence isn’t okay just because other people don’t see it happening. There were long periods of time he would refuse to talk to me as punishment for something I did or didn’t do. There were times I don’t know what I did to receive his silence. For weeks I had to try to make decisions about the kids, ask other people for help and was embarrassed when I had to say I didn’t know (because he wouldn’t answer me) when asked a question that would normally involve a spouse. Those decisions I made were usually wrong, according to him, and he would further punish me by disappearing until late in the night and draining almost everything out of the checking account. I tried to pay the bills, buy groceries and let the kids do things on the money I earned. His money went for his hobbies or alcohol, and I got into trouble if I asked where his paycheck had gone. That wasn’t okay, but I felt I couldn’t say anything more. It’s not okay that he kept reminding me he could hurt me or worse . . . He let me know the guns were loaded and close by. He got in my face, cursed and said we wouldn’t be talking any further about what I wanted to talk about. I stopped most of my talking at home.

It’s not okay to frighten another person. It’s not okay when you don’t know . . . he did things to me when I slept. I was embarrassed and didn’t tell.

I kept thinking that if only I were smarter, skinnier and didn’t complain. But I realized I would never be enough for someone who was okay with hurting me.

Then I told someone what had been happening. They believed me, and there was some proof. And they helped me. I met other women that shared their story, and we cried together because what had happened to us wasn’t okay. I learned about domestic violence. It had been part of my life for a long time.

Now, I’m healing and forgiving myself. I am brave. I know freedom from domestic violence, and it is more than okay!

FROM: ANONYMOUS

I am a survivor of DV. I was with a guy who at first was everything I thought I wanted in a relationship. We did things together as a couple. He was sweet and attentive towards me, but as time went on, he became more controlling and then the physical abuse started along with the mental and emotional along with verbal abuse.

He tried to set me on fire where I had to jump out of a two-story bedroom window to escape him. I suffered poly traumas that has affected my way of life. But I am ALIVE and doing good and getting stronger every day. I AM A SURVIVOR!!!!

FROM: ANONYMOUS

For years, my brain associated domestic violence with married couples where the woman was always the victim to physical abuse. All the movies and tv shows made it look this way. So it came as a surprise when someone had to sit me down and explain to me that I was a victim of domestic violence.

When I was at the young age of 16, I was dating a man who I loved, who I trusted with my life. From an outsider’s perspective, he had everything that a girl wanted. He looked like he would always respect you, no matter what. I have to give him credit for putting on such a good front.

For nearly two years, my partner physically and emotionally abused me. I had just left school and went to his house. We sat in his living room, watching a movie when the argument formed from nowhere. He had accused me of being too friendly with one of my friends, assuming that I had been cheating on him. The talking morphed into yelling and within a matter of minutes, a remote was thrown past me and into the wall. Before I could realize what had happened, a glass was shattered against the wall and I was struck with a book.

He immediately ran to me apologizing for what he had done. Telling me that he had overreacted, and that it would never happen again. I was in love, so I believed him. I wish I could say that it never happened again, but I would be lying.

For months, every little argument left me with bruises, scratches and even hand prints. I was being treated like a worn down punching bag at a boxing gym. The only difference between that and myself was each time I was hit or punched, I was manipulated either immediately or within a few hours.

He would knock my feet out from underneath me, causing me to fall to the ground. He would pin me down and scream in my face. He would grab some part of my body and drag me. He would choke me until I wasn’t able to breathe. He would slam on the breaks and watch my head slam into the dashboard.

Through all of that and more, the one thing that always stayed constant — he never touched my face. If I had a bruise on my arms or legs, it just looked like an accident. In his mind, no one would say anything, it’s not on my face. He was right, no one said anything. Even if they did, it was an easy lie, “I fell.”

I don’t even think that the physical abuse was even the worst part. I could take a punch and hear the apology, it was a routine that I had gotten used to. For me, the worst of it wasn’t physical, it was emotional. And I’m not just talking about the manipulation or apologies.

At some point in our relationship, I lost every single one of my friends. I wish I was over exaggerating, but unfortunately, this was my reality. I wasn’t trusted to be with anyone else.

Any time that I wanted to do anything without him, I had to ask and that conversation would lead to either him manipulating me into staying or physical remark. Eventually, I got tired of having to do this, so I chose to not leave him.

I knew that if I continued putting up with it for any longer, I would end up dead. I was genuinely terrified for my life. I knew that if I stuck around for much longer, I was never going to recover. I didn’t know what to do or who to go to. I had lost all my friends, and my family barely saw me.

After 21 months of being with him, all of it came to an end. I still had no one, so losing him was losing the only person I had left.

I remember the feeling after just one week of being out of that relationship, I felt at ease, my bruises were near gone and I finally remembered what being happy felt like.

It took work and time to build new friendships, but more importantly, gain those old ones back. To this day, some of those friends still are unaware of why I stopped talking to them. I never quite figured out how to tell people what I had gone through, and some people didn’t believe me.

It still affects me to this day. I can’t look people in the eyes, and I have a hard time opening up about how I am feeling. I completely shut down during arguments or high tension conversations. I flinch every time someone touches me, and I don’t know how to accept a hug. But the one that I hate the most is when my right hand shakes anytime I’m scared, nervous or upset. I freak out that people are seeing the weak side of me, the vulnerable side, the one he preyed on.

I still have days that I convince myself that I overreacted, and if I would have stayed, we would’ve gotten past it and been happy or something. But most days, I think about how this man, this terrible human being, ruined me and changed my life forever.

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TRAVEL
CONTINUED FROM A8

“UCO is always a tough match-up. We are very similar to them in the way we play,” Kirchhoefer said. “We will focus on our side of the net and not let the environment get to us. We are just excited to get down there and hopefully bring home another win.”

Sports
Facts

Northwest Football

Northwest football and Pittsburg State have played each other 24 times while both teams are ranked.

Northwest Volleyball

Northwest volleyball defeated Central Oklahoma both times during the 2021 season.

Maryville Football

Maryville football has outscored its previous three opponents 131-47. Maryville and Lutheran North have never played each other.

The Bearcats will look to add a second win in Edmond to their history books, but on the next day, Oct. 8, Northwest will go on a road trip to Wichita, Kansas, for a matchup with another MIAA foe, Newman (7-11).

“Most of our team is actually used to our tough schedule of travel, play, travel, play,” Kirchhoefer said. “So, I think we are going to get another win over Newman as well.”

The ‘Cats have never lost to the Jets, boasting an 11-0 all-time record against Newman.

The Bearcats will finally return to Bearcat Arena for a three-game homestand and a chance at revenge against the Jennies Oct. 11. Earlier in the season, UCM escaped with a 3-2 victory against Northwest Sept. 7 in Warrensburg, Missouri. The Bearcats will have the advantage of the home crowd, as Northwest is undefeated at home this season.

“We’re excited to be home, and UCM will be a great game to open up with,” Ferguson said. “Everyone in the MIAA is tough competition. There’s been a lot of teams that are usually in the bottom half of the conference that are taking down top teams. So, we’re excited to play a good match against UCM and kind of come-back from what happened earlier this season.”

“We have almost been preparing for the UCM match since we lost,” Kirchhoefer said. “We have certain drills throughout practice each week that focus on winning tough five-set matches. We are all excited to get another chance to play them soon.”

After the games against Central Oklahoma, Newman and Central Missouri, Northwest will have a rematch against Washburn at home Oct. 14, then to end the home stretch the Bearcats will clash with Emporia State (4-13) Oct. 15.

“It is really special to be at home for the whole week,” Kirchhoefer said. “I know many girls on the team are looking forward to it. We are also all excited to get to play in front of our home crowd again and hopefully stay undefeated at home.”



TYSON ELLIOT PHOTOGRAPHER
Maryville football junior receiver Delton Davis flies high for a catch, resulting in a touchdown against the Benton Cardinals Sept. 30. The Spoofhounds compete against the 4-2 Lutheran North’s Crusaders Oct. 7.

UNFAMILIAR
CONTINUED FROM A8

“It’s just preparation,” Wagner said. “We stress winning the game Monday through Thursday or Monday through Friday for our Saturday games.”

Getting its starting running back helped the offense find its footing the last few games, said Wagner.

The Crusaders aren’t the

only team on a hot streak. The Spoofhounds have outscored their opponents 131-47 in the last three games.

Webb said the offense focuses on execution, not on scoring points.

“Four games we executed well and in two games we didn’t execute well,” Webb said. “That’s what our 4-2 record means.”

This will be the first time Lutheran North and Maryville

have ever played each other. Both coaches said they have respect for the other and know this game will be a challenge for both sides.

“Lutheran North is a very skilled team — our hands will be full,” Webb said. “Lutheran North beat a strong undefeated MICDS school, which is a very impressive win. We will have to execute and play well to stop their offense.”

BATTLE
CONTINUED FROM A8

The upcoming game will be the 24th meeting between the two teams when both come into the game ranked in the AFCA poll. Northwest is 16-7 when both are ranked. This will be the 14th matchup where the squads are in the top 10. The Bearcats also have the advantage in that scenario with a 9-4 record against the Gorillas when they’re both in the top 10. However, this is the mere ninth game where Pitt is ranked above Northwest, but the Bearcats are 5-4 in those games as well.

“I think it’s definitely a big game when you look at it from the outside looking in,” Jordon said. “But, I think inside the locker room, we just kind of want to take it as another game. We just want to continue to focus on ourselves and focus on what we’re doing.”

“I’m excited for our kids to get the opportunity to go play in the environment they’re going to have down there,” Rich Wright said.

The two best scoring defenses in the MIAA will be on display between the Bearcats and Gorillas. Northwest allows 14.4 points per game, while Pitt allows an average of 14.8 points. The Gorillas also own the No. 2 scoring offense in the conference with 31.4 points per game.

Brian Wright said some of the success on defense for the Gorillas comes from the players’ ability to move around when they need to. He said the defense can create multiple schemes due to the players’ versatility.

“We’ve got a lot of good players on our defense,” Brian Wright said.

Part of the success of the Gorillas’ offense has come from its rushing attack, led by sophomore running back Caleb Lewis. Lewis ranks third in the MIAA in rushing yards per game with 84.4.


On the other side of the ball, the Bearcats boast a rushing defense that has allowed a mere 41 rushing yards per week — the No. 1 rush defense in Division II.

“They’re big up front. I think it starts there,” Rich Wright said about Pitt’s offensive line.


Rich Wright said the Gorillas are very well coached in all three phases of the game. He said they do a nice job of using every blocker to their advantage, and it starts with how well they set things up with their schemes.

The game of football can be very demanding, especially when it comes to a top-10 showdown that could ultimately decide conference titles and regional rankings at the end of the regular season. Jordon said it’s important for every player to not just be physically healthy, but mentally as well.

“Mentality is a huge part, I think, especially in today’s age,” Jordon said. “I think being able to get away from football at times, and not always be 100% football, is a big part of it. I think the time we spend with our teammates in the locker room and outside of practice and film, helps us stay mentally healthy and helps us produce on the field.”




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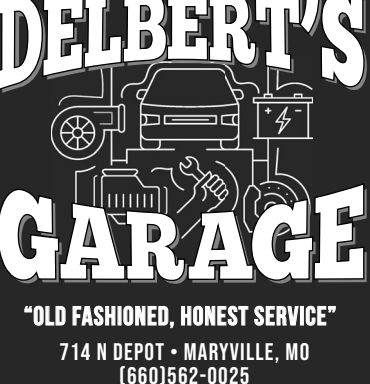
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RIVER BOYD
Sports Reporter | @RiverBoyd5

Maryville football will travel 171 miles to play Lutheran North in Macon, Missouri. This is the second time the Spoofhounds have competed in a neutral site game so far this season.

This neutral site game is different from the rest of the contests on the Spoofhounds' slate because this time it takes place on a Saturday afternoon. Typically, Saturdays are reserved for college teams, but Oct. 8 the 'Hounds and the Crusaders have the opportunity of joining that group as they take the field Saturday.

Coach Matt Webb said his team will have its hands full.

"You earn the right to play on Saturdays," Webb said. "In the past, our team has played in playoff games on Saturdays, so it's not intimidating."

The Crusaders (4-2) and Spoofhounds (4-2) share a similar loss as both squads lost to Blair Oaks earlier in the season. Maryville is 3-1 since that loss, with its only other loss coming from Midland Empire Conference rival St. Pius X.

After starting the season 1-2, Lutheran North has won three straight games, including a 34-18 win against then-undefeated Mary Institute and Saint Louis Country Day School Oct.1.

Lutheran North coach Kyle Wagner said part of why his team has gotten better was that in the last two weeks the team has gotten healthy.

"We've been able to get on a little streak and kind of found our identity," Wagner said. "We knew we had a tough schedule to start the season, so we just kept our heads down and continued to work."

It appears the identity of the team is to execute the game plan on both sides of the ball. In the last three games, the Crusaders have outscored their opponents 163-25.

UP NEXT

MHS vs. Lutheran North
2 p.m. Oct. 8
Macon, Missouri

SEE UNFAMILIAR | A6

INTO THE JUNGLE



DAKOTA WEAVER PHOTO EDITOR

Northwest junior wide receiver Kashan Griffin completes a 45-yard catch against Missouri Western during the Bearcat's 16-3 win over Missouri Western Oct. 1. He is averaging 97.8 all-purpose yards per game through the first five weeks of the season.

Top-10 battle for Northwest

WESLEY MILLER
Sports Editor | @wesleymiller360

Nearly 30 miles north from the Oklahoma and Kansas state line sits a town with a population of over 20,000. Inside the town is a university with over 6,000 students. At the university is a football stadium that can seat 8,343 fans.

That town is Pittsburg, Kansas, and that university is Pittsburg State. Carnie Smith Stadium — nicknamed "The Jungle" — is the site for the Gorillas' home games and the site for Northwest football's Week 6 matchup.

For the Bearcats Oct. 8, "Welcome to the Jungle" will mean more than just a pregame warmup song by Guns N' Roses.

Pitt will attempt to fill those 8,343 seats for when the Bearcats make the roughly 212-mile trek south to their MIAA foe. Coach Rich Wright said his team's preparation remains the same as it does every week, even against the team currently No. 1 in the MIAA standings.

"I think when you play at Northwest Missouri State, you pick up a lot of rivalry games, but, historically, Pitt State has always been one of the biggest," Wright said.

Pitt coach Brian Wright said it's always a big game whenever you have two ranked teams in the same place. "Two traditional powerhouses in Division II football and two very successful programs," Brian Wright said. "We have a great atmosphere here. We have a great fan base. It's always special for our players to play in front of their family and friends. We have a good environment

UP NEXT

No. 9 NW vs. No. 7 Pittsburg State
2 p.m. Oct. 8
Pittsburg, Kansas

here, and obviously when you bring a team of this caliber here, it makes it even more special."

A season ago, Northwest was forced to overcome a 13-0 deficit at halftime for the narrow 20-19 win Oct. 9, 2021. The Bearcats played at home then, but this game will be Northwest's first appearance in The Jungle since 2018.

Northwest has won three consecutive games over Pitt. However, according to Rich Wright, only four of his players have ever played at Pitt before. Sophomore safety Rhett Jordan said he thinks it'll be fun to play in a hostile environment.

"We know what that environment is like, but that noise will be flipped to the other side of the ball," Jordan said. "It'll be a challenge, but I think we're up for it. I think we know how to handle it."

The impact of the game goes beyond how many seats are full at Carnie Smith Stadium or how loud the fans who occupy them are. Both teams enter the game ranked in the top 10 in the latest American Football Coaches Association Division II Top 25 poll. Pitt is No. 7 and Northwest is No. 9, respectively.

SEE BATTLE | A6

End of road trip approaches for Northwest volleyball

RIVER BOYD
Sports Reporter | @RiverBoyd5

Northwest volleyball will be back on the road again after three straight road matches, including two matches one day apart. The Bearcats traveled a total of 10 hours to play Nebraska-Kearney and Fort Hays.

The Bronchos will be the fourth match of the No. 10 Bearcats' five-match road trip. Northwest is 2-1 on this road trip, including two sweeps over Missouri Southern Sept. 24 and Fort Hays Oct.1. The Bearcats' lone loss came from a sweep by No. 5 Nebraska-Kearney Sept. 30.

Junior right side Jaden Ferguson led the team in kills in the matches against Hays and Nebraska-Kearney, with 10 kills in the

match against the Lopers and 12 kills against the Tigers. Freshman middle hitter Kate Frakes pitched in with 12 kills in the Fort Hays match, along with one block.

After being swept by Nebraska-Kearney, the team was able to bounce back with a sweep over Hays. Ferguson and Frakes said it's a testament to the team to be able to respond as well as it did, even after a loss.

"Kearney is always a tough place to play in. They're a good team, they're really solid," Ferguson said. "But, coming back, we just knew we had another opportunity to come out, show what we're made of and get a good win under us."

"I think that's just kind of our culture as a team," Frakes said.

Now, the Bearcats (12-4) are faced with a match against newly

UP NEXT

NW vs. Central Oklahoma
6 p.m. Oct. 7
Edmond, Oklahoma

NW vs. Newman
3 p.m. Oct. 8
Wichita, Kansas

ranked Central Oklahoma (17-2). Central was ranked No. 24 in the latest American Volleyball Coaches Association Division II Top 25 poll. Central is 17-2 on the year, its two losses coming from the Lopers and the Gorillas. The Bronchos have two top-25 wins against No. 23 Central Missouri (10-6) and No. 12 Washburn (13-3).

SEE TRAVEL | A6



DAKOTA WEAVER PHOTO EDITOR

Junior setter Alyssa Rezac sets the ball up for sophomore middle hitter Avery Kemp. Rezac had 33 assists against Pittsburg State Sept. 21.



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